

SEPTEMBER 23, 1934

GUEST, DR. VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON

WJZ

AMERICAN-BOSCH RADIO EXPLORERS CLUB

NUMBER 6

(5:30 - 5:45 P.M.)

SEPTEMBER 23, 1934

FRIDAY

(SIGNATURE - "SAILOR'S HORNPIPE" -- ACCORDION)

OPENING ANNOUNCEMENT:

Presenting - the weekly meeting of the Radio Explorer's Club!

(ACCORDION CONTINUES TO END OF THEME...THEN OUT)

ANNOUNCER:

Come sail the seven seas with us!

(WIND AND SURF EFFECTS..FOUR COUNTS)

Explore the wild jungles of Africa!

(JUNGLE EFFECTS - FOUR COUNTS)

Visit the cannibal countries!

(TOM TOMS - FOUR COUNTS)

Circle the globe with the American-Bosch Round-the-World Radio!

(STRONG GUST OF WIND -REGISTER - FADE)

CAPTAIN BARKER:

Ahoy there, boys and girls - all hands on deck - This is Captain Barker in person. You know - father and mother are invited to join us too, for we're off on a wonderful adventure today. Just two weeks ago we navigated the waters of the South Pole.

(CONT. OVER)

CONT:

Today we're headed for the North Pole, with a man who knows as much about the Arctic circle as any man alive.....the famous explorer Dr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson of the American Museum of Natural History.

Speaking of exploring I got one of the thrills of my life the other night. I was sitting at my American-Bosch Radio, turning the dials, when in came some wonderful music from a port 10,000 miles away. I could scarcely believe my own ears when I discovered I was listening to station VK2ME, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.

You know whenever I hear of Sydney I think of Aron Gronberg, a sailor man in love. Gronberg was a splendid deep water sailor of the old school who rounded Cape Horn with me on the ship British Isles many years ago. Upon our arrival at Sydney several of the hands came aft to my cabin and demanded to be paid off. Gronberg, however, elected to stand by the old ship, for as he put it, he had gone through the tortures of hades on the outward passage round the Horn and he wasn't going to be fool enough to spend his hard-earned wages on wine, women, and song.

"No, Captain Barker," he said to me, "I'm lyin' low, and I'd like you to keep my money in your safe, sir."

"Very well, Gronberg, m'son," I told him "all the more for you when I pay you off in England." Among his shipmates he had the reputation of being a tight-fisted bloke, with no fond eye for lassies. However, he had never reckoned with that potent word, L-O-V-E.

Several days passed. I was sitting in my room one evening when a timid knocking sounded on the cabin door.

It was Gronberg.

"All right, Carpenter!" I said "come in. What's on your mind?"

He poked his big bullet head round the door and grinned sheepishly. "I want to go ashore tonight, Captain Barker. Will you advance me five pounds?"

As I counted the money into his hands he seemed very much embarrassed and avoided my gaze. He thanked me and left, but next morning I was surprised to find that he didn't turn to and I began to think that men-before-the-mast were all alike. I suspected, of course, that Gronberg's previous resolutions had at last melted before the mischievous arch of a feminine eyebrow.

A week went by and still there was no sign of Gronberg. Then one day, I met him coming along the pier.

I dressed him down in six languages, but he was not in the least abashed. Instead, his broad face was wreathed in smiles, and his eyes glowed like sidelights. "Captain," he said "I'm the happiest cuss in Sydney." "Will you pay me off, sir? I want to settle down ashore!"

"A woman, eh?" I said disgustedly....I hated the thought of losing Gronberg, the best carpenter I had ever had in any ship.

"Yes, sir," he said, looking at the toes of his boots, "A fine lass Nellie is. We want to get married, sir, and buy a little place of our own."

Well, I paid him off that day, wished him Godspeed on his new voyage and never expected to see him again, but that's where I was wrong.

Soon after that we sailed for Southampton.

We had been in port nearly a month when a beautiful full-rigged ship was docked just astern of the British Isles. She was the Yankee Tam-O-Shanter, and I had often heard that her captain and officers took great pride in their reputation as sea-bullies. Most seamen steered clear of her. They had no desire to have their pates cracked open with a belaying pin.

I was passing the Tam-O-Shanter one morning and a low, hoarse voice came from her deck: "Captain Barker, Captain Barker, wait a minute--please!"

Astonished, I brought myself up all-standing. "Gronberg" I gasped. "What are you doing aboard the Tam-O-Shanter?"

He lowered his voice to a rasping whisper. "Please, not so loud, sir! I'm in a terrible jam. When you paid me off I headed straight for town and turned my money over to Nellie. She said she'd keep it safe for me. Well, sir, the next day we were supposed to get spliced, but.....when I woke up that morning, I found she had lit out like a lamplighter for ports unknown. Now where I am aboard this Yankee . I tell you, Captain Barker, this ship is fire and brimstone. Listen, will you ask the skipper to let me go? I want to sail with you, in the British Isles."

"I'll see what can be done, Gronberg," I told him, and I did my best. But it was no use - a few days later she sailed for Portland, Oregon, and Gronberg, much to his regret, was still aboard. ...But that is not quite the end of the yarn. Several months later I met the captain of the Tam-O-Shanter at the Olympic Club in San Francisco. You may imagine my feelings when he told me that Aaron Gronberg's troubles were over. The poor fellow had been washed overboard during the Yankee ship's passage across the Pacific.

Well now - on with our adventure to the North Pole.. We're in luck today in having as our guest an explorer who has spent 10 solid years in the Arctic region, Dr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson. America's foremost authority on the Arctic. Dr. Stefansson will be interviewed by our good friend and fellow club member, from the American Museum of Natural History - Hans Christian Adamson.....

ADAMSON: Thanks Captain Barker---well, I hope all the members of the Club have their woollen mittens on for now Dr. Stefansson will give us some cold facts about the Arctic.

DR. S: Cold facts? Let me tell you, Hans, that it can be hot as blazes in the Arctic during the summer. There are hundreds of thousands of square miles in the Arctic where temperatures range from 80 to 95 degrees and in places they go to 100 degrees. And don't forget in the U.S. people begin to drop from the heat when the thermometer goes to 80.

ADAMSON: Well, you certainly must admit that the arctic is the coldest place in the world during the winter,

DR. S: No, it isn't. As a matter of fact the coldest temperatures ever recorded on the Canadian fringe of the Arctic Sea is around 54° below zero. Cold - yes, But don't forget that the weatherman has recorded 68 below in Miles City, Montana, and that is only 150 miles from Billings. People are apt to regard the North Pole as the Cold Pole. But the real Capital of King Frost lies in the temperate zone in Yakutsh province, Siberia.

- CONT: The temperatures there sometimes drop to 90° below zero, which is more than 120° below freezing.
- ADAMSON: Did you hear that, Captain Barker, 120 below freezing; That begins to be real chilly. But what about the snow fall, Dr. Stefansson? It's very heavy, isn't it?
- DR. S: No -- Hans - it isn't. [The average snow-fall in the Arctic is less than it is in Pennsylvania.] Why in my ten arctic winters, I never saw worse blizzards than those we used to have in North Dakota when I was a boy. [As a matter of fact, when it comes to biting winds and bad weather, the mid-winter lake-front in Chicago is hard to beat anywhere in the world.]
- ADAMSON: Well, you are certainly destroying the dreams of my childhood. Next thing you'll tell me that Santa Claus has no reindeer.
- STEFANSSON: Well, there are a few million domestic reindeer in the Arctic and many millions of wild reindeer which we usually call caribou. They go in tremendous herds. Take, for instance, a caribou herd which passed our camp in Arctic Canada northeast of Great Bear Lake in the autumn of 1910. The Alaska Eskimos who were with me knew nothing about large caribou herds. For a day or more they noticed a strong smell which they did not recognize, but which was a sort of barnyard smell. Then for a day caribou began moving by in bands of tens, twenties and hundreds, sometimes grazing and sometimes running, averaging, perhaps, as fast as a man's steady walk, say three or four miles an hour --

Then for two days the dense herd moved by, the animals so close to each other that they were like a living carpet, that covered a strip that was several miles wide. Then for another day the stragglers followed again in bands of dozens or hundreds. There must have been about a million caribou in that one herd.

ADAMSON: What did the animals eat - snow balls?

DR. S: No, they have plenty of better things to eat. [The Arctic has on the average about as much vegetation as the cattle lands all over the world. Moss, lichen, grass, leaves from bushes and other flowering plants. In fact, there are more than 700 kinds of flowering plants in the Arctic.....] B

ADAMSON: That is surprising, Doctor. I expect you'll tell me next that there are butterflies and bees in the Arctic.

DR. S: Yes, indeed. And they even go exploring north beyond that lands. Admiral Peary reported seeing a bumble bee flying over the polar sea bout half a mile north of the most northerly land in the world. And De Long captured a butterfly on the sea ice far from land some 700 miles north of the Arctic circle.

ADAMSON: Listen Captain Barker, let's take off our snow shoes, and throw away our woolen mittens. I thought we were going to the frozen north.

CAPTAIN: (CHUCKLE) And so did I, Mr. Adamson. You know, there's a question I'd like to ask. Are there any mosquitos in the arctic, Dr. Stefansson?

DR. S: No, none, on the ocean, Captain, and only a few along the shore.

ADAMSON: Then it ought to be a good place to spend vacation with no mosquitos.

DR. S: But I didn't say that. I said there are none along the shore or at sea. However, there are worse clouds of mosquitos on the Arctic mainland of North America or Asia than anywhere in the world. An Alaska Eskimo wouldn't think the New Jersey mosquitoes worth mentioning.

ADAMSON: Then instead of selling ice to Eskimos, the way to get rich is to sell them fly screens for their snowhouses.

DR. S: You are right about fly screens. Every traveler to the Arctic carries fly screens and mosquito netting, and they sell like hot cakes. But Eskimos don't use fly screens for snowhouses. Besides many Eskimos have never seen a snowhouse.

ADAMSON: It seems impossible that some Eskimos could live in snowhouses without all other Eskimos knowing about it.

DR. S: No, not at all. Some Eskimos, live farther north of other Eskimos than Portland, Maine, is from Palm Beach. Some are farther east of others than Portland, Maine is from Portland, Oregon. In fact, travelling the way they would have had to travel before white men came, it was farther from some Eskimos to others than it is from Newfoundland to Brazil. And Eskimos travelled very little.

ADAMSON: Well, I'm learning more and more that I know less and less about the Arctic. What about the long, completely dark Arctic winter?

DR. S: There's no such animal, Hans, not in the Eskimo country. If you call it dark when you can't read a newspaper out of doors, then I should say that right at the actual North Pole you would have about five months of darkness and seven months of daylight....But no Eskimo lives so far north that he doesn't have some day-light on Christmas Day and no polar explorer has ever had a winter camp on land so far north that he didn't have some day-light.

ADAMSON: Well - All I can say is that this interview turned out to be radically different from what I thought it would be. I feel all thawed out, don't you, Captain Barker?

CAPTAIN: I should say I do. And a good thing too. For I see by the papers that it won't be long before airplanes will fly to Europe and Asia by way of the Arctic to save distance. And, speaking of flying to Europe, didn't you tell me that Miss Amelia Earhart is going to be with us next Sunday.

ADAMSON: That's right, Captain, she is.

BARKER: Fine! Splendid! We'll certainly be glad to welcome the world's No. 1 woman flier to the Radio Explorers' Club. Well, I am glad to report that I've been getting some mighty nice letters from members of the Club. Here's one that's typical"

"Dear Captain Barker" writes Owen Pavit, 12 years old, of Philadelphia, Pa. "The membership button arrived this morning and I just had to take my pen in hand to tell you how proud I am to wear it.

The Radio Explorer's club Map is a dandy - I didn't know there were so many foreign stations. The membership certificate sure is a beauty too and dad has promised to order a frame for it so that I can hang it up in my room."

By gad I like to get letters like that. It tells you better than I, myself, can do, what a privilege it is to join our Club. Ben Grauer here is waiting to tell you how to become a member so I'll say clear sailing to you until next Sunday.

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CANNOUNCER:

Before telling you how to join, I have some special news for you. At next Sunday's meeting Captain Barker will announce the first of a series of contests for members of the Radio Explorers Club. A number of important prizes will be given. Only members of the Club will be eligible to participate, so it's important that you join up right away. To join, all you need to do is just send your name and address with the name and age of the radio set to which you are listening, to American-Bosch, American B-O-S-C-H, Springfield, Massachusetts.

Incidentally, you will be interested to know that American--Bosch scored a sensational hit with its new 1935 radios at the New York Electrical Show at Madison Square Garden this week. Especially interesting to Club members attending were the American-Bosch Round-the-World Radios which tune in broadcasts from all over the world. There was also tremendous enthusiasm in the Consoles featuring Right-Angle tuning, an exclusive American-Bosch development and the only new principle in radio design at the show. The small portable Personal radio sets also came in for a lot of favorable comment. Your local dealer is now showing all of these American-Bosch radios in his own store. Look - and listen.

(SIGNATURE FADES IN)

GRAUER: The American-Bosch Radio Explorers Club meets here every Sunday afternoon with Captain James P. Barker in command. Famous explorers are guests of the club each Sunday under special arrangement with the American Museum of Natural History. Next week Amelia Earhart, America's number one woman flier.

(SIGNATURE TO CLOSE)

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